DEMAND No. IV.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT EXCLUDING TRAVANCORE UNIVERSITY.

Mr. A. Gopala Menon (*Director of Public Instruction*): Sir, I move that:

"Government be granted a sum of Rs. 44,09,000 under Demand No. IV—Education Department excluding Travancore University."

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla: Sir, in rising to support the Demand, I wish to bring to the notice of the Department certain features.....

President: Order, order: I take it that the House will sit for the consideration of the Debt Relief Bill at half past five or quarter past five; what is the pleasure of the House in this matter?

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi: Sir, we can resume business half an hour after seven.

President: Half past seven. I think if we begin to sit at about half past five, we would be able to make some progress by half past seven.

The question that the House do sit at half past five was put to vote and declared carried.

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla: Sir, first I want the Department to bestow attention in raising the position of the staff and management of aided institutions in the educational system of this country. The managers and teachers in aided schools feel that the Department does not give the recognition which their services to the country demand. Facts and figures which I quote will bring this home.

We have 297 English schools in the State, of which 39 schools are run by the Department and 258 by private managements aided by the Department. The net expenditure for these 39 schools is Rs. 3,36,260. The grant which Government gives to 258 schools is Rs. 29,441. In other words, Rs. 336,260 for 39 schools and Rs. 29,441 for 258 schools are the amounts that Government spend for schools run by them and run by private management aided by them respectively. It has been expended by way of grant to aided schools. I contend that so far as secondary education in this country is concerned, the grant is pathetically nil.

Coming to the vernacular or Malayalam schools, out of the 3321 institutions, 992 schools are run by the Department and 2329 by private management. On that 992 institutions Government's net expenditure is 17,58,471 while for the remaining 2329 institutions the expenditure is Rs. 9,29,602. These figures will explain to us how the Department supports aided schools and what great service these private institutions render to the Government and the people. We must also be alive to the situation that would arise if

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla.]

these private agencies say that they cannot run the institutions. I hope that the Government and the Department will realise the advantage of the private institutions and the benefit that they do to the State.

The second statement which I want to place before the Department and the Government is that very many circulars have recently been issued by the Department. I appreciate the spirit and the intention that are behind these circulars. I do not question that. But I am only afraid whether they would really help the Director to realise his idea and whether these circulars would not act as a handle to the subordinate officers to oppress the private school management and teachers therein.

I would only quote a few illustrations. For example, a circular of the Director to bring greater efficiency in teaching in schools was issued to all the schools. The circular states that no teacher should take outside work without the sanction of the Director. I very much appreciate the idea underlying that circular. There are teachers who take tution work. Some of them have four or five tutions. But they attend to this because the eight rupees given to them by the Director will not in any way keep them alive. But that is not my point. They need not be allowed to conduct tution work. But the wonderful effect of the circular is that there are now Assistant Inspectors who threaten the teachers of aided schools with the withdrawal of their license books because the teachers happen to engage themselves in bee-keeping, Poultry farming or co-operative enterprises. Sir, there are teachers who are interested in bee-keeping ; there are men who have a knack for poultry farming ; and there are persons who associate themselves with co-operative societies. But the Assistant Inspectors threaten them with the withdrawal of their licenses for teaching : While Mr. Statham was the Director of Public Instruction in this State, he told me and Mr. C. V. Chandrasekharan also may know it, that he issued a circular that there should be gardens in all primary schools. One Assistant Inspector threatened that he would withdraw the recognition of their schools because they had no means to create gardens in their school. Only last week I got information from an aided school which I want to state here. I did not take a written statement from them, because I am sure they will keep to their word. The Department have overseers to inspect the building of private schools. One of them told the teachers of a primary school that a particular part, I do not know whether the floor or the upper part, was not in proper condition and that he would recommend for the withdrawal of the recognition of the school. I need not describe here how the Headmaster managed to escape the threat of the

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Overseer who had the effrontery to take the powers of the Director into his own hands. If the Director thinks how many circulars are issued like this, I am sure he will reconsider all these circulars.

Sir, I shall hurry over one or two matters more. Well, there are some of us who believe in the ultimate spiritual reality of this world, believe in the existence of a God. If a God fearing teacher wants to pray in the school or if he wants to teach his students the Gita or the Bible on a Sunday, then the Assistant Inspector is there to threaten him with the withdrawal of his license on the ground that it is an infringement of the neutrality of religions. Are we not allowed to read out the Gita to our children in our schools? Are we not allowed to read the Bible on a Sunday? I can understand the argument that the neutrality of religions wil be violated if anybody tries to effect conversions in the schools. But, believing as I do in the efficacy of religion and of prayer, will not the Director allow me to pray with my children, to read out to them the Scriptures. How does it break the neutrality of religions? I do not understand it.

There is a second thing which I should like to point out and that is the question of finance. I agree with the Director that there is a good deal of unholy financial methods in our educational institutions. I appreciate his attempt to purify the system. But my objection is that he has not gone to the root of the question and that the root of the question is not in the teacher or management submiting the accounts. He knows that if a management and the teacher agree, any kind of account can be brought forward. If they two agree, and if the teacher while receiving Rs. 100 signs for Rs. 200, how could the Director discover that? There is also this fact. Take the question of fee concession. The Government allow fee concession to a certain proportion of the children. For the purpose of avoiding unnecessary competition in the schools, the Director says that no more concession should be given. As Mr. Govindan said the other day, supposing there are ten children who are very efficient and who cannot pay their fees. How could they pursue their studies? It could be interpreted as an attempt to attract children from one school to another. But when concession is denied the poor teachers are put to trouble. A teacher may have a saintly nature and out of his salary he may support the education of a few children. When the Director insists that full fee should be levied, the teachers pay out of their salary to make up the concessions that they give to the students.

Mr. A. Gopala Menon: Will the honourable member inform me who is responsible for that corruption?

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla: I do not say that the Director of Public Instruction is responsible for that. It is the general situation. The whole point is this. I say it is a mere myth that a Manager

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla..]

contributes towards the current expenses of an institution. The Manager has found money for the compound, for the buildings of the department and to think that the Manager will also give a contribution to the current expenses is to think high of his sacrifices. The Primary School teacher gets the lowest pay, it is true. But could Manager give him seven rupees more ? According to the new system grant is given to about 1/3 of the deficit. Suppose a master gets Rs. 100. The Manager asks him to sign for 200 rupees. The account shows the required deficit and the Manager gets the grant. So I say let us get out of the myth that a Manager contributes to the current expenses. Then if you introduce a system by which grant is given on that basis, I am sure it will not work well. If there are teachers who are prepared to serve the country on a voluntary basis why should not the authorities allow it. (I hope you will give me two or three minutes more) My point is that if the Director gets suggestions from an advisory body, it would be possible for him to know the exact situation in the country. It is said that he has consulted the Divisional Inspectors occasionally. I have to point out that these Divisional Inspectors do not do their work properly. My objection to any Advisory Board composing of Government servants is that a Government servant knows that Government holds a particular view. Knowing that Government has a particular view he is impervious to all arguments.

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi : Is it not a fine tribute to the Civil Service to say so ?

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla : I am sorry I do not know much about the Civil Service. Anyhow the need for an Advisory Body was once admitted. That Advisory Body was composed of about 35 or 40 people, some of them lawyers, some merchants, and some newspaper editors who will never have any idea of education and who have no real interest in education. If you have an Advisory Body like that consisting of 37 to 43 people I think it is absolutely worthless. If on the other hand Government would now nominate or the Council would elect four or five men, who know what education is and who can advise the Director, I am sure that will be a great help to him. They would give us better direction as to how the education in the country has to be carried on.

I am anxious to speak about the proposed Third Form examinations. I feel as a teacher myself that this is a great mistake from the educational point of view. Children of the age of 12 should not be allowed to sit for Government competitive examinations.

Mr. A. Gopala Menon : What is aimed at is not a competitive examination but only a promotion examination.

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla : Even in the case of a promotion examination the admission to the Fourth Form is controlled by the examination. I have known how great a time we take to train

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

boys for the School Final examination for about 8 to 9 months. They are asked to answer all question papers and answers are put in their minds almost mechanically, which serve no purpose at all. If that is so in regard to children of about 14 or 15, how much truer it is in the case of children of 12 to 13 years of age. When there was a discussion as to the old Third Form examination I was told that Dr. Miller made a speech, to which I draw the attention of the Director.

Mr. A. Gopala Menon : Is the honourable memb r aware that third form examinations are current in the Cochin State for a long time ?

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla : I am aware of that Sir. And I am sorry for it. I am sorry that no examination of a compulsory kind will really help pupils.

Mr. James Fletcher : Do you think it wise to follow Cochin ?

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla : We need not follow any one outside. We in Travancore have men who have studied the subject, who know the psychology of children and who will give us the right direction. We need not go to Cochin. I would rather deprecate the method of holding the examination at the end of the third form And with the Pro-Vice Chancellor by the side, I hope that Statham report will be again studied and something will be done along that line.

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi : I rise to support the motion. I quite agree with my honourable friend Mr. Kuruvilla in saying that the Government have to make a greater provision for helping the miserable teachers of private schools. Mr. Kuruvilla does not mention the number of those teachers in private schools who do not get any salaries at all and who are not given any grant by Government. In the Administration Report we are deluding ourselves by the high level of literacy. If there is a State that cannot provide living conditions or that cannot give living wages for the schoolmasters, all that I can say is there is not much for praise. I will even go to the extent of saying that Government instead of trying to give free elementary education should devise some plan of making the children of the well-to-do to pay not only for the education of themselves but for the education of their less favoured brethren. In some such way, and by effecting economy in other branches of administration, it is the duty of Government to provide adequate funds for giving grants and for making the necessary improvements in the educational system of the country. Then coming to another point, the repetition of which is irritating both to the speaker and the audience, let me say that right from 1107 the different Directors of Public Instruction have openly stated that the school buildings are worse than cow-sheds. There is nothing like approximating to furniture in some schools. But in

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi.]

subsequent years unfortunately no improvement is made. Adequate financial attention is not given to these institutions. I can at the same time sympathise with Government for it. I can visualise the chart which the Financial Secretary provided about the high percentage of funds for education and comparative superiority of Travancore. I feel as a Travancorean very egoistic on the high percentage of literacy compared with some illiterate neighbours here and there. But such personal or natural egoism does no good unless we find out some means of raising funds. Could it not be done by handing over as many of the institutions as possible to private agencies ? There I have to reflect a little and say in certain cases 'No' for we have to keep certain educational standards in the country ; we have to provide some model institutions. But I think there is no force in the argument, that no school should be handed over because I find that many of the private institutions in the country are better from the point of view of efficiency or at least as good as the departmental schools. Therefore I would suggest that, keeping one or two central institutions to serve as model schools, other institutions including all the secondary schools should be handed over to non-denominational agencies, who can provide adequate security to Government that they will manage properly, and by making economies in such directions, the savings should be advantageously used for the less favoured Vernacular schools or Malayalam schools.

Mr. Eswara Pillai : May I know from the member whether such non-denominational agencies are available in Travancore ?

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi : When the Government have unequivocally expressed their intentions in that way, I feel there will be no difficulty. I think honourable members like Mr. Kuruvilla, Mr. Eswara Pillai, Mr. Govindan and other gentlemen who are interested in the education of the State will come forward to do some work for the education of the country.

It is very tragic indeed that the Director of Public Instruction has issued a circular against teachers who went about honeygathering. I do not think that such a circular was issued in the spirit in which Mr. Kuruvilla expressed it. Of the Vernacular school teachers, I think that many deserve better wages and better living conditions. But I also remember tons of them who were the bugbear during elections, who were seen in the premises of court house to supplement their income by playing the part of even touts; yes, in days before the Bar Council. There are some teachers who make all the factions in the country. There are teachers, Sir, who give the material, the literary material for making speeches even in the Legislature on communal claims.

Mr. V. Sankara Menon : May I know from the member whether there are not lawyers also who do it ?

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi: I know that very many of them do it. Sir, it is highly incumbent that the Department which aims at the moral and spiritual development of the children in the State should not be entrusted to characters who could not very easily be reached by the Security Sections of the Criminal Procedure Code. Therefore, it is highly essential that their extra-school activities should be directed, or controlled or at any rate watched by the departmental authorities who have a responsibility to the parents of the children entrusted to them.

One point which there is a slight difference of opinion between Mr. Kuruvilla and myself is in regard to the institution of a new examination at the end of the 3rd Form. It is with very great respect and with an apology that I desire to differ from my friend who is a reputed authority on education in this part of India. But I also claim to be, not a great authority on education, but one who was a work-a-day schoolmaster who has learned the mysteries of pedagogy not for a short time but for ten long years. I found that the educational standards were definitely going down, that for want of a standard test, all sorts of influences were brought to bear upon the headmasters, managers, both departmental and non-departmental, to give promotion to children. Therefore, to tone up and to raise the standard, it is highly essential that there should be a test and a test that one could think of is the test at the end of the Third Form.

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla: Does the honourable member know that there was once a general examination which was afterwards stopped?

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi: I know that some forty or fifty years ago there existed such an examination. But I do not think that because it existed once and later it was abolished, we should refrain from having a test now. It is better that this examination which is proposed is tried for some time. Anyway, it assures a betterment in the standard. I do not assert that it is going to be a complete success. Anyway one of the means by which the standard could be raised is by holding an examination. After all, this examination is not going to be very worrying. As far as the pupil is concerned, an examination in the class room whether conducted under the auspices of the school or the State or the University or an International Bureau of Education means the same strain.

Chairman: Your time is up.

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi: Sir, I know that the examination is a strain on the pupil and there is no greater guarantee of my being aware of it than that I once wanted to avoid

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. Kochikkal P. Balakrishhan Tampi]

sitting for the examination in the University class, with disastrous consequences on my progress in college. Children too have their horror of examinations. They suffer some agonies, or some discomfort whether it is a State examination or a class examination.

I have to speak a word, with your permission, about the personality of the Headmasters in departmental schools. Sir, even if it means a drain on the education exchequer give some of them bountiful pensions and send them away. Let us get rid of them so as to save our children. I know it is hard upon them ; but they have not the requisite personality. Their sole concern, their interest relate to the peregrination of the Education Director or the D. I. They have absolutely no cultural contacts and have no interest in the country. These apologetic creatures should be persuaded to retire and their places must be given to people with personality. The whole education and the success of the State depended in the past upon the personality of some eminent headmasters. But now the headmasters are men who are promoted by the mere chance of their coming up the civil list.

Mrs. Aberanam Gnanasikamony (*Nominated*): I support the motion. It is true that special attention is paid to the education of this State and the Education Department takes up 20 per cent of the revenue of the State. We receive with gratitude the facts according to the education administration report of 1114. It is the duty of the Government to give primary education to all the children in the State. As we all know the education in this State is being carried on by two agencies, the departmental and private agencies. It is an admitted fact that many of the private schools turn out more efficient work than the departmental schools. The aided schools of this State have a big grievance regarding the policy of grant-in-aid to such institutions and especially to primary schools. The management are being hard pressed. Some 30 years ago when there was no economic depression as now, the grant to a primary school woman-teacher was Rs. 12½ but today the grant is to be Rs 8. The State income has risen, the total amount spent on education has risen but the grant for a primary school teacher has fallen down from Rs. 12½ to 8. Sir, how can a family man in the status of a teacher live on this Rs. 8? A private school teacher gets Rs. 8 while his fellow teacher in a Government Primary school gets Rs. 15. Both are the subjects of His Gracious Highness the Maharaja. This seems indeed a step-motherly treatment. And now look at their retired life. One enjoys pension and the other goes a starving. This Rs. 8 is not enough to earn his daily livelihood and how can he afford to save for his old age. The benefit of

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Provident Fund is entirely denied to Vernacular School teachers, it is only for English School teachers. This is really heart-rending and that is why each and everyone wants a job in the Government. I appeal to the Government that some measure should be taken to redress our grievances in this. We do have a large-hearted genius as the head of the administration, and a very reasonably sympathetic officer as the head of the Department. So, we do believe that the aided schools are being saved from this disastrous position as early as possible.

Sir, I differ from Mr. Kuruvilla about the III Form examination. The arrangement for holding a public examination at the end of III Form Course is really commendable. We used to have a Madras Government Examination called the Lower Secondary Examination at the end of the III Form Course some 40 years ago. The present School Final people cannot stand equal to those Lower Secondary ones in many respects. I fully hope this attempt will really raise the education standard and help as a sift to the High School classes.

Chairman : Mr. Kuripe. I must say that honourable members who have given their names, are in courtesy bound, to be present in their seats when their names are called. Mr. Kittan may speak.

Mr. T. K. Kittan : സർ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവകുപ്പിലേക്കു ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന സംഖ്യ മുഴുവൻ അനുവദിക്കണമെന്നുള്ള എന്റെ അഭിപ്രായം പ്രകടിപ്പിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

ഫോറത്തിൽ തേഡ് ഫാറത്തിൽ ഒരു പരീക്ഷ ഏർപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നതിൽ ആളുകൾക്കു വലിയ അസഹ്യതയുണ്ട്. അതു പരീക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിലല്ല. അതിനുള്ള ഫീസ് കൊടുക്കുന്നതിലാണ് വിഷമം. ഫീസുകൊടുക്കേണ്ടായെങ്കിൽ നാട്ടിൻപുറങ്ങളിലുള്ളവർക്കു ഇതിനു ഒരു വിരോധവുമില്ല. അവിടെ അതുകൊണ്ടു ഗുണമുണ്ട്. തേഡ് ഫാറത്തിൽ വച്ചു മാഷന്മാരെ ഇതു ബുദ്ധിപ്പെട്ടു എന്തിനു കണ്ടുപിടിക്കുന്നു. അവർ പഠിച്ചു സ്ക്രീനിങ്ങ് ക്ലാസിൽ ചെല്ലുമ്പോൾ മാഷന്മാർ ആരു, മിടുക്കന്മാർ ആരു് എന്നു് കണ്ടുപിടിച്ചുകൊള്ളട്ടെ. അതിനിടയ്ക്കു എന്തിനു അവരെ ഇട്ടു കഷ്ടപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. നാം വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിൽ ഒട്ടും പുറകോട്ടുപോകാൻ പാടില്ല. പരീക്ഷ ഏർപ്പെടുത്തിയും മറ്റും അതിന്റെ പ്രചരണത്തിനു ഹാനിയുണ്ടാക്കരുതെന്നാണു് എനിക്കു പറയുവാനുള്ളതു്. കൊച്ചി വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിൽ നമ്മെ ജയിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നതിൽ എനിക്കു വലിയ അസഹ്യത തോന്നുന്നുണ്ടു്. അവരെ നമുക്കു ജയിക്കണം. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിൽ ഇപ്പോൾ സാധുക്കൾക്കു വലിയ കഷ്ടതകളു

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. T. K. Kittan]

ണ്ട്. പുസ്തകം വാങ്ങിക്കാൻതന്നെ നിവൃത്തിയില്ലാതിരിക്കുന്നു. ചെറിയചെറിയ പുസ്തകങ്ങളുണ്ടാക്കി ക്ലാസ്സും ക്ലാസ്സും ചക്രത്തിനു വിറ്റുവരുന്നതു വലിയ കഷ്ടമാണ്. അതുപോലെതന്നെ നോട്ടുബുക്കുകളും കുറെ കുറയ്ക്കാമെന്നു നോക്കേണ്ടതാണ് ചെറിയ കുട്ടികൾ അവരോളം പൊക്കത്തിൽതന്നെ നോട്ടുബുക്കുകളുമായി പള്ളിക്കൂടത്തിലേക്കു പോകുന്നതു ഞാൻ പലപ്പോഴും കണ്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെൻറ് അധ്യക്ഷൻ ഈ കാര്യങ്ങളിലെല്ലാം ശ്രദ്ധിക്കണമെന്നപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നു.

M. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar: Sir, I support the demand. In doing so, I wish to make a few observations. It seems that the Department has given instructions to all the schools, whether private or Government institutions, that *Vancheesamangalam* should be sung to the correct tune in all the schools. So far as my knowledge goes, in many of the English High Schools it is not being observed. Especially in some private schools no *Vancheesamangalam* is being sung. In some schools where *Vancheesamangalam* is being sung, it is not sung to the correct tune.

Chairman: Order, order. The House will now rise and meet again at 5-30, for legislative business.

The House rose at 5 P. M.

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

DEBT RELIEF BILL.

The House re-assembled at 5-30 P. M.

Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar: Sir, I move the following amendment.

In Clause 4, add. another sub-clause as follows:

"any liability of a person which does not exceed the annual income of that person"

Sir, I think this amendment will meet with the acceptance of the honourable members, because, it would on the very face of it seem unreasonable that a person who has got an annual income of, say Rs. 10,000 should get concession in the matter of payment of his small debts. Say, for example, an officer drawing a salary of Rs. 800 or Rs. 900 per mensem and getting an annual income of over Rs. 10,000 which could easily be ascertained; suppose such an officer, for an emergency borrows Rs. 500, to say that he should pay only Rs. 350, seems on the very face of it very unreasonable and unjustifiable. However much sympathetic one could be towards the debtors, one must not stretch the reason to such an absurd extent as to impose such heavy penalty upon a creditor who has helped a fairly big man, sometimes bigger than himself. The situation

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly